

Grasshoppers



Siege of the Crickets, by Dan Baxter.

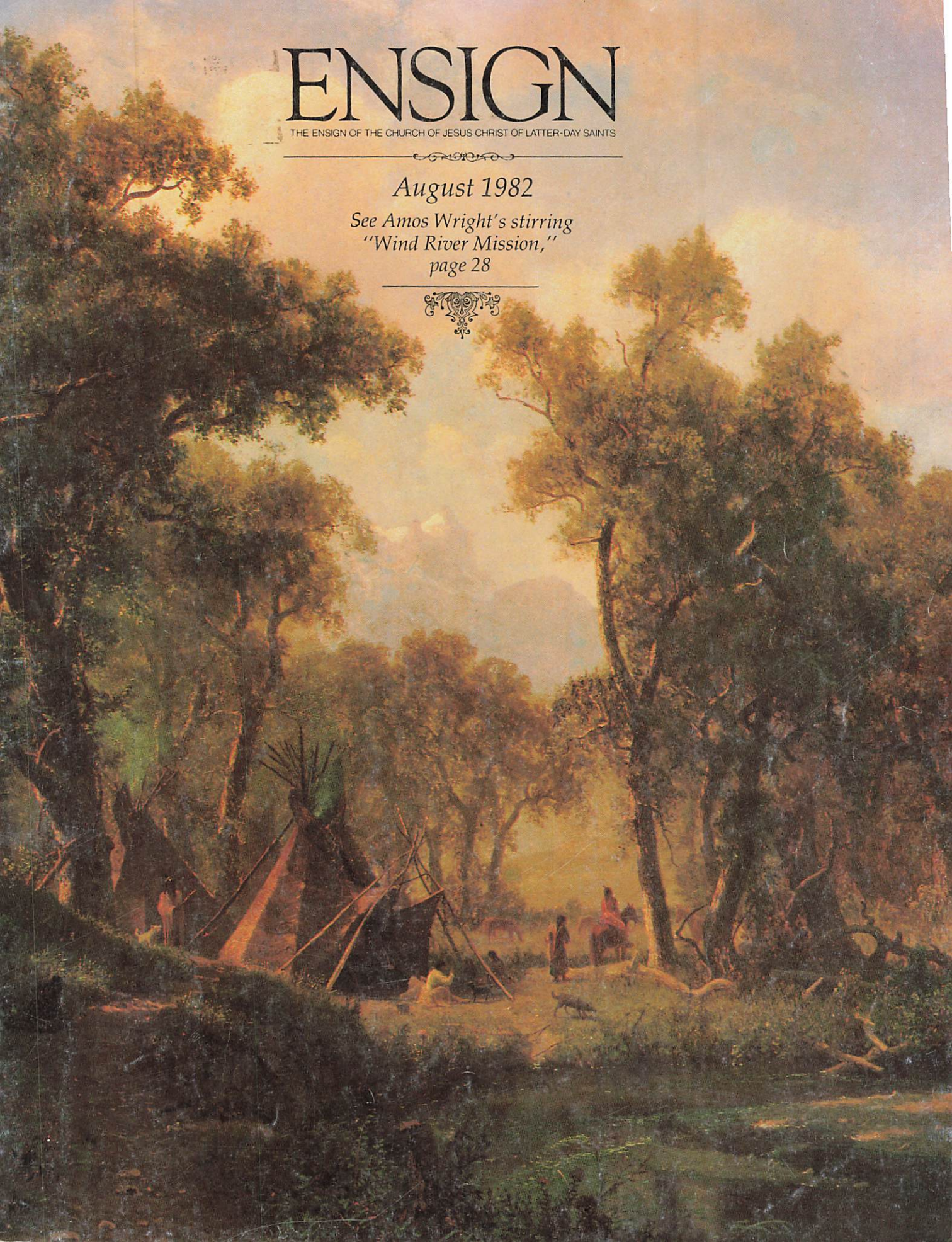
In May of 1848, millions of crickets descended upon the grain fields in the Salt Lake Valley. "Man's ingenuity was baffled. He might as well try to sweep back the rising tide of the ocean with a broom as prevail against these swarming pests. . . . Then the miraculous happened." Thousands of sea gulls flew to the valley from the Great Salt Lake and began devouring the crickets, "until the plague was stayed, and the crops of the Pioneers saved." (B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church, 3:331-33.)

ENSIGN

THE ENSIGN OF THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

August 1982

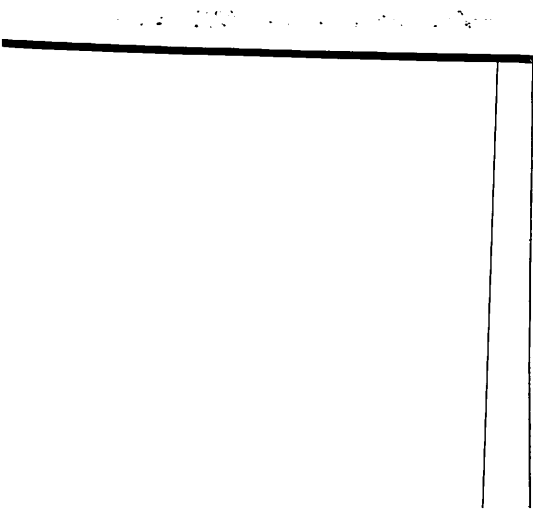
*See Amos Wright's stirring
"Wind River Mission,"
page 28*





From their nesting places on the islands of the Great Salt Lake, seagulls came to devour hordes of destructive crickets menacing crops of pioneers. For this providential deliverance the seagull became Utah's state bird. (Painting by Jack Vigos)

-Deseret 1776-1976 p124



MORMON CRICKET is not really a cricket but belongs to the family of katydids and long-horned grasshoppers. It can be very harmful to crops. It lives in the western United States and as far east as Kansas.

Mormon crickets are brown or black and grow about 2 inches (5 centimeters) long. They have small wings but cannot fly. In summer, the female lays its eggs one at a time in the ground. The young hatch the next spring and are full-grown by summer. Farmers use poisonous dusting powder and baits to kill them.

In 1848, a swarm of Mormon crickets threatened to ruin the crops of the Mormon settlers in Utah. But flocks of gulls suddenly appeared and ate the insects (see UTAH [picture: Mormons Gather]).

Scientific Classification. The Mormon cricket belongs to the katydid family, *Tettigoniidae*. It is genus *Anabrus*, species *A. simplex*.

URL LANHAM

See also ORTHOPTERA.

The Mormon Cricket is very destructive to crops in the western United States. It has small wings but cannot fly.

USDA

